VIA TRIUMPHALIS

By the same Writer

THE KNIGHT MYSTIC
THE ENCHANTED LADY
JOHN IN PRISON
ENNERDALE BRIDGE
WALTHAM THICKETS
MESOPOTAMIAN VERSES
SAUL
VAE VICTIS
BEYOND BAGHDAD WITH THE LEICESTERSHIRES
RABINDRANATH TAGORE

VIA TRIUMPHALIS

BY

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TO MY WIFE

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Mount Scopus — Dedication

WHILE the sun, amid blood-red skies, on the Prophet's Height
Sank from our sight,
Or on Moab Hills the moon rose globed and large,
Like a giant's targe,
Where the Roman camped, when the darkening heavens grew loud
With the rushing crowd
Of wings, of a host that flocked, foul, hard, without pity,
Round the dying city,
Where now grew the fruited vines, and Olivet's spurs,
With a young wood of firs
Green-fledged, low-murmured as with sough of the sea
And, with rosemary
Sweet-coppiced, scented the evening air as with spice
Out of Paradise,
How have we two, in the fragrant, wonderful hour
When Night, like a flower,
Opened about us, watched the fireflies flitting
Around us sitting,
And laughed at Athene's owl, all staring-eyed
And ruffled in pride,
As he leaned from his perch in the almond-bush, each horn
As sharp as a thorn!

CONTENTS

	PAGE.
VIA TRIUMPHALIS	9
DEATH'S INITIATE	15
THE WALKER IN THE LILIES	17
BETH-HORON	22
THE LAST VIGIL	25
BUSH AND BIRD	26
LUDD	27
JUNE IN JUDAEA	28
IN HOSPITAL, DAMASCUS	29
QUESTIONING	31
FROM THE WILDERNESS	32
Fiant Lilia	33
ABANA LYRICS, I AND II	34
DAMASCUS ORCHARDS	36
THE YARMUK VALLEY	37
ON KENISEH	38
NYMPH IN THE BRAKE	40
THE OWL AND THE LADY	41
SMOKING REEDS	43
WILLIAN TREES	43
A MATTER FOR THE POLICE	44
NORTON COMMON	45
FIVE ELMS	46
TWELFTH NIGHT	47
HALF-LIGHTS	48
THIS ANCIENT THORN	49
WILD BROOM	50

	PAGE
Barren Sloe	52
Starlight	54
The Pillars of Hercules	55
Shadows	56
Freedom	57
The Cloud-Messenger	58
The Victor	59
Mid-August	60
Banian Verses I, II, and III	61
Egrets in Rain	63
Green Pigeon	64
Evening Voluntary	66
Encouragement to Pipals	67
Rebuke to Banians	68
Spectators	69
Himalayan Bulbul	70
Life and Death	71
Church Reform	73
A Yellow Moon	74
An Old Woman	75
The Banian's Guests	76
Through the Rain	77
Ekteswar *Mela*	78
Flowers in Bowl	80
Retrospect	82
Recollection	83
Invocation	85
Epilogue	86

Via Triumphalis

THE deep, clear, racing brook; the bridge
Spanning both tide and river
And linking the Road*
Whereby they came,
Graving on rock each sequent name —
Briton and Greek,
Frank and Assyrian,
Roman and Ramessid!
On the far bank, where winds make quiver
Those creepers hanging like woodnymphs' hair,
Under the tangle the shapes are hid,
(Time-blurred) and arrowy script which speak
Of the march of the arrogant Ninevite.
At hand, see the Stoic's entablature,
Rock-cut, which blazons Aurelius' boast!
New, glaring, white,
Lo, at its side what words proclaim,
Where the tide thrusts tongue-like in from the coast,
And the rains and the years' slow drift
Have buried the Flint-Man's tools, where pale
Pink flowers the branchèd asphodels lift,
Lo, there what words flaunt the tale,

* The Dog River—Lycus of Strabo—north of Beirut. The immemorial coast road crosses it. There are over ten Egyptian and Assyrian inscriptions on the rocks—also a Greek, and one by Marcus Aurelius, Arab and French inscriptions, and now ours.

At the Ages' end how my comrades strode,
Late in the centuries, last up the Conquerors' Road!
But rocks with their deeds let the Victors fill!
We have found a bliss that transcends their skill.
So, leaving the chiselled cliffs that declare
Whose fames would fain with the rocks endure,
And leaving the ancient sea, whose waves
Of merchant and corsair whisper and dream,
Checking the bragging, garrulous stream
With name for name, his Turk to their Tyrian,
Strike in, to the hills' wild heart! Strike in!
Let your wonder begin!
Lift, lift your eyes,
And thrill with surprise,
Aye, shout for the sight,
Far in, beyond height upon height,
Of Sannin, of, shouldering and snowy, that culminant
ridge,
Clear, beautiful, white,
And cleansing the vision!
Strike in, with the clear, rushing water beside us,
And .... that light at the valley's end!
Ah, the tall, swaying, feather-topped grass,
Deep as where the boar lurked when he slew
Adonis! At foot of the glade,
A pampas, a wind-ruffled palisade
Of thyrses such as the Sylvans bear,
In the river-sand

For a kindly purpose set, be sure,
Since they hide, when the good Pan wills,
A man and a maid alone in the hills,
Alone, with all Gods to connive and befriend,
Where, placed for a guard, the great fells stand!
Lo, the brambles drooping, as when at the fair,
Proud, desolate Goddess, all wild, as she flew,
All anguished, they caught, and her blood splashed
the thorn,
Splashed the rending briars,
And the Syrian uplands rang to her wail
For the hunter-lover all gashed and slain,
And the mocking caves,
Whose floors the Flint-Man's weapons strew,
From dripping, ice-pillared, vast recesses,
Her sorrow cast back in derision!
Lo, the brambles trail, rich-ruddy with fruit,
And, as for memorial, lift where we pass
Red boughs! And the rose-thickets, tinct with grain
Of Autumn's glory, with scarlet leaves
Dashed through and through,
Blush deep with haws, as once with roses,
And glow, as a withered covert when fire's
Hot tongues in the dry sticks flicker and shoot!
But the Hill-Gods call; and they chide us,
Who on our steep path linger;
They have scattered the way with their signs to guide us;
And they wait their Child,

The Lady for whom snowy crest, steep vale,
Were a home, and in lonely, elf-beloved closes
The Forest and Winds were a foster-folk,
Till one, by whose speech a magic woke
Subtler than breathed from their music wild,
Drew near, and she turned, being mortal maid,
Leaving immortal lovers to mourn.
But she comes to your valleys again!
And a golden circle the crocus weaves,
Idly, to hold her fast, who by spell
Stronger by far, can escape at will!
Yet blossom, and spill
Through the fairy cracks your vanishing gold!
Vainglorious, flaunt! She is here to behold!
And let the quaint, small spikes unfold
Of dwarf bee-orchis! And clefts be lit
With cyclamens' flaming, brushed-up tresses!
We have come to the heart
Of the hills, where the Great Gods dwell,
Who, wise themselves, wish lovers well;
And the wilderness deepens round,
Slope on slope, thicket on thicket piled,
And the river is hushed by the River-God's finger,
And hums, as it slips through the stones.
Plucking apart
The carob-boughs, we will climb and sit,
Where a giant boulder juts
Far out, and the eyes can look

Up to the ridge which the thin firs crown,
Can look dòwn
Over the sharp, stiff, gleaming fence
Of ilex, and over the sprawling, dense
Jungle of fragrant, wax-berried myrtle,
To the quiet-singing brook.
Not ten miles hence,
In the copse where the Hunter died,
From his blood-drops sown in the soil
Sprang, purple and large,
The windflowers aflush by the river's marge,
And in rifts and ruts
Of the storm-seamed fells aflutter, aglow;
And, Spring by Spring, these brakes still know
Whose presence quickens the hallowed ground!
For Kypris walks,
Where the drab, hard rocks to her grace are foil,
Foil till the hem of her swaying kirtle
Touches the herb and the budded stalks;
When brute Earth atones
For the murdered boy, for the harboured boar,
For the shrinking flesh that the briars once tore,
Atones, with worship of blossom and leaf,
For the wanton wrong, for the bitter grief;
And Lycus, thridding his purfled mazes,
His voice to a jubilant chant upraises;
And Kypris walks, and the glimmering sheen
Of her robes waves, emerald-green on the green.

We have come, we are here!
And the myrtle's delicate breath and flowers
Make wild! O Gods of this river, these bowers,
These airs snowy-cool, upon you I call
In triumph! O Lebanon, Father of all,
Great cedar-proud King!
Lo, the Mountain-Queen whom I bring,
The Lady the Forest blesses!
Though I praise you, my head above all I rear,
Who more than her fosterfolk am dear,
Whom her will for lover and lord confesses!

Death's Initiate

FLOWERED fields, where happy children played
and hearts
Were joyful, as the moon full-orbed shone down,
Blessing rose-thickets loud with nightingales —
Those paths were mine, and, had I lived, my feet
Had been your foremost, meting out your way.
But now my peace is made, my face is set,
And here, with will at rest and lifted hands
Of invocation, on her grace I wait,
Whom now I cry for. Blossom-Queen o' the Dead!
Lover of poppy-crimson paths (as these
Are red with flowers whose seed no God shall own,
Nor any man their sowing boast)! Blest Child
O' the pitiful Earth, Koré whose lifted lids
Are sunlight on bare fields and glimmering brows
Of lilies, trembling for the joy they know!
Turn favourable eyes this way, and look
On me, who over mountain-slopes as fair
As thine have wandered, gathering flowers as fair,
But now, with all my withered crowns put by,
Gaze toward thy throne, where those have taken stand
Whom Spring shall garland nevermore, nor voice
Of mortal praise awaken. (Yet for these
My love sleeps never, neither shall the heart
Remain forgetful, vainly though I sing
Honour for these, whom face to face I knew.)

But thou, their Queen, dear Lady of flowers and ghosts,
Swaying with eyes, not sceptre, toward thy seat
These men, thy friends and subject-souls that came
Most lover-glad (for proud compulsion drove,
Of valour, Lady, and joy to thy fair realm,),
Now look on me, on me who strive and dream,
Desiring those brave presences, and here,
(Where idly Spring with blosmy tread goes by,
And idly Summer and Autumn scatter fruit
And harvest, such a Winter shuts from sight
The mind they move no longer), wait, aware
That where the treasure is the heart abides,
The heart not now a pilgrim, howsoe'er
The wearied body plods and dreams of home!
Now gaze on me; and, as thy Mother takes
The dead year to her breast, and gathers in
The faded leaf and brown, so thou, her Child,
With no less pity than hers, command to thee
Thy servant-seasons all (though other fan
Than gaze o' the eyes which shone through Enna once
It needs not, since a zeal is mine that leaps
As fire to thy white throne), and bid awaken
The wind of my deliverance, wafting near
This life, which flutters, a leaf and dancing waif,
That soon, with dear companions compassed round,
I may in Hades praise thee, last and best
Of Gods, who gave the dead-in-life thy boon
Of death, and blossomed peace before thy throne!

The Walker in the Lilies

FOR me, Death might have had the hated road *
  Whereby that March we strode—
The burnt-up scrub, the thorn, the festering sand,
The flies that cursed that Mesopotamian land,
The sandfly plague, the choking, hideous leap
Of swirling dust, a hell-broth pot astir,
One seething buzz and blur!
But . . . that, a later day, beneath the steep
Jebel Hamrin, †
Young flowers should peep,
By shaded waters, where a flushing breeze
Touched into gracious life the Spring's first green,
Where red anemones,
Poppies, and hyacinths blue,
Swayed, and where rosy heads of amaryllis
O'ertopped the wheat—
That Death should from those rough and grim,
Gaunt hills—those lion's teeth, fit place for him!—
Come down, and walk God's lilies!
Death walking through the lilies!
Not as, in Palestine,
Christ walked among them!
Ah, here was one did wrong them,

* The march from Kut to Baghdad, February-March, 1917.

† Our disaster at Jebel Hamrin, towards the Persian foothills, March 1917. The only experience of fighting in decent country, in Mesopotamia.

Dashing with blood their cups of morning dew!
Reddening their waters pure to Devil's Wine!
Trampling a vintage foul with hateful feet!
Ah, Guest of Cana! See what guest was here,
Mocking Spring's marriage-feast with deadly fear!

Nay, but in Palestine,
When tulips were most fine,
When cistus flowered, and iris, when a rush
Of lilies stormed the naked rocks, why, then,
Men must walk on, nor heed the bullet's whine;
Though a sleeve would flush
With bursting veins beneath, and one would stop;
And another drop,
With sobbing throat, and blood spirt out and stain
An earth already rich with brightest grain,
All colours, and, with poppies' sanguine glow
And tulips, staring windflowers, red enow.
In Palestine,
I know the hill where Service sleeps, and where
Boy Penfold died, and there
The flowers wash up in seas, as if to meet
The seas that run from Cyprus, lapping round
Old Arsuf's ruined pillars and haunted ground;
Flow up to meet the seas—there's cliff, and sand,
A strip; then, either way, the flower-tides beat,
Foam-flowers and earth-flowers, blue o' the waves
that way

And green o' the field this hand.
And you might search the world before you'd find
A place more to the mind
Of peaceful hearts and such as need to pray.
Yet all that summer-tide
This was no spot for dreams—you used to hurry
(Walking, of course,) through marguerites, and start
When from the long grass quails would whirr and
flurry
(Start, and, the moment after,
Curse them with nervous laughter).
Away on Bedouin's Knoll
Five-nines would rap; and if you stayed a spell
By the cactus-hedged fig-grove and midway well
(Midway to Piffer Ridge from the beach), just then
Some damned gunner would shoot—they can't abide
That things should rest, these men that shoot—he'd
shoot;
Johnny* 'd be quick on suit;
Over your head would drone an answering shell.
Or be vicious rush of a pipsqueak, landing where,
In one more minute, at most, your feet must fare.
At times you laughed to exchange the flowers for a
tomb
On Argyle Ridge, to drive deep down to the gloom
Of rock-cut graves where, in the hill's rough heart,

* "Johnny Turk."

The Amorite hid his dead, and now the men
Of Keely's watch were delving, gnome and troll.

The bitter way that led,†
Bridging the poisonous brook
Of Jordan, bursting Gilead's frowning rocks
(The way the Londons and the Anzacs took),
The bitter way that led
To where Es-Salt, high on its crater-rim,
Forgets the Ghor, which heat and dust bedim;
Bordered with hollyhocks,
That way shone red,
A ribbon, a gay, proud, glittering way that lit
The strong, fierce hills whose untamed heart it split.
But through the hollyhocks, more bright by far,
And more erect, and with a nobler star
Of beauty glimmering on their brows, were those
Who went, and knew that, ere the journey's close,
Death through the sheen of hollyhocks would walk,
And their dear blood would flow,
Tinting the gray, unblossoming thorn to glow
Redder than dawn, redder than flower on stalk.

God, since we men have made
Such havoc in Thy flowers (these flowers that fade,
Yet are so sweet to clothe the hills and fling
Over the stones a rainbow light in Spring),

† Allenby's failures East of Jordan, March and April, 1918.

Forbid that in Thy Kingdom any dwell,
Save children, and those child-like hearts that died;
Or change our wills by spell
Of Thy great love, and take us to Thy side!
Grant, where Thy heavenly hill is,
There may be flowers and children, Death being dead!
That, howsoe'er those slopes be tulip-red,
He walks not there among the lilies!

Beth-Horon

NIGH south from Jaffa, leaving the gray beach
And glinting sea, strike in, until you reach
A plain, whose wide arms, seized of wheat and oil,
With flowers and foison crown a bounteous soil,
A plain that, warm with fostering airs that bless,
Sleeps in the lap of its own loveliness.
Yet pause not here; though Heaven and Earth may
sing
Congratulation, and Eternal Spring
After her lilies sow incessant flowers,
And temper with sea-winds the hotter hours,
Yet there's a spot my thoughts prefer to trace,
So long as Memory keeps her sovran place.
Behind the fields a rifted, narrow pass
Leads in, and shouldering mountains heave and mass,
Whose highest fell still carries scar and sign
Of one fierce hour, however bramble-vine
Sprawl on the stones, and wild-rose over rocks,
Confusedly heaped, trail a loose arm, and stocks
Of live-oak bristle with armèd, emerald leaves.
Starved hawthorns thrust up soiled and ragged sleeves
From ground that seems of Nature's coarsest plinth
Compact, one drab mosaic; terebinth
(Dwarf, to be sure; nought comes to stature here,
Where briar and hawthorn flower in fifty year)
Crops out in spots; and scattered fig-trees stand;

And there's an oliveyard on your left hand,
As up the slope you climb, at top to find
The line of stones the Londons crouched behind.
We had machine-guns here; see, still the ground
With empty cartridges and round on round
Of unused ammunition strewn! Hard by,
Tins, belts, a shirt, and rotting helmets lie.
The hill-foot has its graves; but of that strife
The tale is dead, and here insurgent Life,
In briar and brave, green ilex lifting, fain
Would of that wrath rub out the hateful stain,
And, for the sterile hour that slew and hurt,
Would, as she may, her ancient place assert.
Yet these loose stones, hurriedly flung together,
Shall witness, through the storms of fiercest weather,
Of what a storm once swept an earlier day
And tossed men's lives like withered leaves away.
Lo, as, by tracing trench and mound, we tell
Ere history dawned where warriors fought and fell,
And know, by ditch and tower and builded ramp,
Where once the Legion kept their busy camp,
So here, if any follow after, bearing
Like blood with us or for our story caring,
Though centuries hence, they of our day shall read,
Scratched on the hill's hard brow, our graven screed:
Here how we lay, one bitter dusk of winter,
When bullets glanced and bit the rocks, and splinter
And nosecap sang, and all the air was torn

With iron, and shattered stone, and twisted thorn;
Here how we laughed, and ducked, and mocked the foe,
And kept the height.
They, seeing this, shall know.

The Last Vigil

UNDER the swaying boughs of the apple,
Where gracious snows drip down,
Knee-deep in early flowers I stand,
Waiting, at watch where the sunbeams dapple
The spring-time, flecking with silver the brown
And emerald, glowing wave-bright on my drawn brand.

So should he wait the inevitable end,
Knowing the Sun his helper, Earth his friend,
The man for whom of His pure love God made
The thirsty desert with light and shadow a glade,
And the red field a meadow, where round his feet
A grass of lilies rippled, and wild buds sweet.

Bush and Bird

AS down the Kedron Valley I was riding,
Where olives veil the rock-cut tombs, I saw
An owl, who neither for myself had awe
Nor of that glaring hour had thought save scorn,
But ruffed his wings and perked each feathered horn,
In anger that I came; but I was glad.
For why? You ask, as chiding
A mind so lightly stirred.
Know then, this joy I had
For sunlight on gray leaf and ragged stone;
But most to see, vouchsafed to me alone.
There, on Athene's bush, Athene's bird.

Ludd

THEY plant the cactus here,
Lest men forget Thy death;
For all the air
Is one sweet breath
With orange-groves, and fields, in flowers arrayed,
Have with the fostering winds this compact made,
That all who through this happy greenness fare
Shall wander lulled from grief, or wake to see
The flower-crammed Bush its rich memorials rear
Of Cana's Feast in holy Galilee.
Wherefor with this sharp thorn,
Fetched overseas, men since Thy day supplant
Our too-soft thoughts, and oil and wine would scant,
To oliveyard and orange-grove set bourn,
Lest men forget Thy death,
Dreaming of Galilee and Nazareth.

June in Judæa

NOW, in this summer's heat,
Our hills are withered; cliff and rocky fell
Shed their brief crowns; only, beside our feet,
The way's still proud with golden asphodel.

The fairy halberds, thrust
I' the storied turf where Spring encamped so late,
Tarnish, their steel-bright edges burn to rust—
Iris is down, the ridge is void of state.

With golden asphodel
The way's still proud; but tulip's tongue is dust;
Red windflower's gone; and poppy's flames abate;
On the swaying roads a white dust dances fleet.

In Hospital, Damascus

O LORD, our Governor,
Is not my lot more strange
Than any fabled tale of flux and change!
This man who sits, my bed beside,
Scanning a skit with seeming-careless eyes,
Yet heard last mail his wife had died—
His house of life about him tumbled lies.
That dear, remembered lad,
My brother, who two years ago lay down
For his last sleep on earth; and he, my friend
Of youth, whose generous, patient days had end
Where on his grave the rocks of Moab frown—
Needs must Thou be, O Mind, and needs in Thee
Our diverse paths have rest and unity—
Needs must Thou be, or else I must go mad!

Why hast Thou cast about Thee
Thick darkness and a cloud?
Love Whom we travail for?
Ah, see the hearts of all the nations bowed!
The men who bear without Thee
Trouble and anguish and a breaking mind;
Women who needs must carry to the grave
Their wrong of motherhood unrealised,
Who in their hearts a locked-up casket bear
Of yearning love no other life can share,

Whose eyes the hot tears blind,
Seeing that alien earth and senseless wave
Have hid the hearts wherein their own hearts had
Life and a poured-forth joy that made them glad.—
Why hast Thou so with darkness shut Thee round,
Whereby Thou art not found?

12. 1. 1919

Questioning

THOU Living Purpose, dimly understood,
Thou Whom I held for known,
And Whom I served, a Will beyond my own,
What is this word
Now in the darkness of my spirit heard?
And what this questioning, whether ill or good
I know not, so my heart is vexed
And all my mind perplexed?
Whether Thou art at all, or just and wise
(As once we held) and good past all surmise,
Or evil, is a thing hid from my eyes,
That only know Thou art not to be found.

Pity the heart Thy hands have made, the will
In darkness wavering, fain to serve thee still!
Now, ere the day in cloud and mist go out,
Answer, and save! Now, in this dusk of doubt,
To this poor, flickering mind that perisheth,
Ah, speak, with some clear word, of life, not death!

From the Wilderness

THIS is he that came
  Praising God in flame.

Through the desert's burning air,
With lips too parched for prayer . . . .

And in battle's gulfing tide,
When friend and helper died . . . .

Lord, when clamant fears were loud,
This is he nor bowed
Nor denied the Name,
Nay, but overcame.

Whence this man, so hurt and frail,
So set, as in a jail,
'Mid days that suffered wrong,
He shall stand among
The angels, who excel in grace
Yet shall yield him place.
And, should they question why,
These his scars shall cry,
Shall answer and proclaim:
This is he that came
Praising God in flame.

Fiant Lilia

GOD said: Let there be lilies.
He touched the grasses;
And in their beds such stir
Lived, as with day's awakening, when the East
Whitens, and darkness passes.
So spread apart
Their crowding stems, and from the blades which thickened
(To fence from hurt
The frail, sweet glory that was now their heart)
First squills upgrew,
Lifting their bells so delicately blue;
And then, more grossly girt,
Red tulips flickered, flaunting heads of flame,
And amaryllids came.
In the gray rocks, where thistle and cringeing bur
Clog the starved soil, blue crocus quickened,
And yellow gleam
Of gagea; and, beside the wimpling stream,
'Mid fern and shade of swaying tutsan, stood
Arums, that wrap their beauty with green hood.
Last, when Spring called a feast,
With flowers whose eyes are stars they lit the hills,
And made of daffodils
Their summoning trumpets; and no meaner plinth
Would serve for hall's mosaic, but hyacinth;
While irids were the lavish grass they threw,
In rushes' lieu.

Abana Lyrics

i.

NOW that the winds of winter
Waken on Lebanon,
Abana's struggling waves,
Chill from their frozen caves,
Rush by the green excess
Of tangled ferns, and press
Through the flowering mints and cress.

Scurry away and hide you,
Desolate days! Run on!
All heavily though you go,
Dark with your turbid woe,
Hasten, and give you room
To Love, that would lead, for gloom,
Rivulets crowned with bloom!

ii.

WHERE Abana's seven brooks flow,
The poplars toss and lift
Tremulous leaves, that show
Shimmer of lights that shift —
Shadow; and lights that gleam;
Emerald leaves and white:
By Abana's sevenfold stream,
Prince Naaman's old delight.

But I, where the trickling drops
Gather together, and run,
To burst through the bramble-copse
And dazzle and dance in sun,
Far rather walk, to behold,
Where the cresses make their bed,
What delicate buds unfold,
What mints their sweetness shed.

Here the rich maidenhair
Droops; and the waters fall,
Murmuring, hushed from glare,
Over the mossed cliff-wall.
I think, as I walk, of a land
Silver with springs, with bowers
Green — of my heart, that was sand
But is cool with fountain and flowers.

Damascus Orchards

LOVELY with almond-blossom and flooded water,
With wind-flushed sheen of swaying orchard-meadows;
With azure starred of infrequent grape-hyacinth;
Misted blue with the fig-groves' wintry haze;
Ruddy with budded apricot; snowy with apple —
Damascus, now into April glory awakening.

The Yarmuk Valley

LIGHT green of tamarisk shows
  Pale on the dark, sharp oleander-leaves;
Deep through a jungle Yarmuk flows,
With loop and curve his swift path cleaves;
And the long valley glows,
A burnished shield, far-sheeted with gold,
With light packed full as the hills can hold.
Though tamarisk's head's but a clouded dust,
His beauty faded, his youth grown pale,
Red hollyhocks
Flower from the steep, rough rocks;
Rose-laurels over the oil-black shale
Their fragrant, pink-tipped spears upthrust;
And the reed-muffled brook through the vale
Runs glad, for the Goat-God lies —
Great Pan, whom mosquitoes trouble not,
Who, being a Baal, 's immune from flies —
Piping at ease in some wind-cool grot.

On Keniseh

BLEAK Lebanon's crest
You cross, and look down
To the sea's unrest,
Breaking a thousand fathoms below,
Where by Berytus spread
Sand-reaches red
And olives fence the Syrians' town.

And once in November
I came where the lines
Began of stiff pines,
And from Magoras' verge
The upward surge
Of myrtle and oak
In thin waves broke
On that darker screen;
When lo! a sea
Of Lebanon heather!
Red-flowing, a sea
Round the rough, grim pines!

When Kypris appears,
With Spring, and uncloses
Her stores of delight,
Then with pink and white
Of sweet rock-roses

This covert is bright,
And the cliff-sides hold
Great pools of gold,
Where broom flowers free.
But . . . this was November!
Chill mists straying;
Winds, and swaying
Pines—yes, and heather,
Which I had not seen
For these eight years.
So God I remember
And praise for the heather,
For the Cumberland weather
And red, flowing heather.

Nymph in the Brake

NYMPH in the brake, thou fair deceiver, hence,
Nor with thy treacherous seeming mock the sense!

I thought yon thorn to sudden blossom burst;
I dreamt that Spring flashed forth; and wondering,
'Whence',
I cried, 'this glow where 'twas December erst?'
Nymph in the brake, thou bright deceiver, hence!

I thought yon woodland lane before me flowered;
That through its gloom a mystic opulence
Of dewy stars was on the brambles showered.
Nymph in the brake, thou vain deceiver, hence!

Nymph in the brake, arrived to mock the sense
With gleam and flight! Thou dear deceiver, hence!

The Owl and the Lady

OWL in the hollybush,
Sitting so still,
With wide eyes staring —
What Fear climbs the hill?

Sit close in your covert,
Your crimson-set fence
Of sharp, glowing leaves!
What, bird! You flit hence!

. . . .

Now, through the winter eve
Tinted with flame,
Riding, a Lady
Along the wood came.

Over damp, drifted leaves
That deadened her pace,
She rode, nor slacked rein
Till she saw the round face;

Then, checking her horse,
She raised her fair head
To the frost-polished leaves
And berries deep red.

. . . .

If the bird were a man,
He would leap for the sight,
But the foolish old owl
Is already in flight!

On the pale, flushing skies,
To wet fields he flits down,
And is lost, as he settles,
Brown wings, in the brown.

Smoking Reeds

SEE how the struggling fire
From the damp heap in a white wraith escapes!
But, deep within, the red heart fiercelier glows,
Till with a leap the ghost becomes a god,
And shouts and dances on his shrivelling cage.

Willian Trees

THE winter evening spills
Its store of quietness ineffable,
And from its horn of beauty fills
The empty elms with sunset.
Low fields lie blue in distance; the grove throws
A shadow-copse on the gleaming lake's repose.
Against the darkness glows
One lamp, a diamond.

A Matter for the Police

THYRSIS, as late from Cumnor hill
To Oxford town I went,
Words which transcend poor shepherd's skill
A signboard did present.
Haply some clerk who wears the gown
Can set their purport free . . . .
'Bear left in centre of the town
For Banbury'.

Thyrsis, it seems an oversight
To leave a bear at large,
Yet who shall blame the fearful wight
Who so forsook his charge?
Was it for this grew Banbury cross,
Her longed-for guest delayed?
Is she still peevish o'er the loss?
Still in the shade?

O vanished days of high romance,
Which had of bears no lack!
Can it be true, this wondrous chance?
And come the dragons back?
In Oxford streets of grave renown
Be there such toys to see?
'Bear left in centre of the town
For Banbury!'

Norton Common

FLOWING at last, now Pix
Through willowherb's jungle of gray, dry sticks
Straggles, while thwart-flung twig and grasses
In flakes of shadow his waves thrust down.
Black-berried privet cowers, drab, forlorn,
And the ragged thorn
Out of all his swelling, crimson crown
Scarce a handful lifts of wrinkled haws.
Flits furtive jay round bushes brown,
And, with sudden rush under briar's red clusters,
Fugitive blackbird flusters.
Through the mist-suffused air, fine-drawn like gauze,
A filmy wraith, December passes,
And, seeming at rest in the heaven's half-height,
The sun that should climb hangs mild and white.

Five Elms

FIVE elms against a sunset,
The cawing rooks' bare towers;
Pink flush of budded almond;
White glow of damson flowers —

Gaze, heart, and from the vision
Gain peace for weary hours!
Seer of a thousand sunsets
And countless nights of flowers!

Twelfth Night

NOW is the time to build the fire which shows
With what fair rites our Holy-tide must close;
For, as the Wise Men came with gifts, so we
Finish the Feast of God's Nativity
With incense such as puts their pomps to shame.
Laurel now gives up its green ghost in flame
And pungent mists that mount to roof and rafter,
Falling, a cloudy fragrance, brief while after.
Bright-blazing holly, brightlier-blazing yew,
Fierce-spluttering, die; with sprigs of Mary's Dew,*
And snapping, resinous pine (more sweet than myrrh),
And polished barberry, swart juniper,
Neat box, and ivy dull, and (last to go)
White-waxen-berried, tough-leaved mistletoe.
Nay, for the end, in pagan rite allow
To burn of sombre yew one crackling bough,
That so the gracious little Lars who dwell
With us and this our hearth have guarded well,
May take the spitting fire for leaping salt.
Nor will the season's King impute for fault
That our glad spirits on this holy night
Invoked the flickering wraith of old delight.

* Rosemary.

Half-Lights

NOW on this shadowed mood
What message falls?
As one who hears in a wood
Echo of vanishing calls,
Surely I caught through stir
Of the minutes' tick low cries?
Caught through the candle's blur
Light of remembered eyes?

I am listening, would ye speak!
Ah, if your love were here,
He would be strong, now weak!
The vision dimmed would clear!
Ruined and foiled though left,
I should repel Death's scorn!
More than the Strong Man's theft
Would from his grasp be torn!

This Ancient Thorn

THIS ancient thorn now like a beggar stands,
Thrusting through tattered sleeves its agued hands
That shake to the chill breeze, a mendicant
For such poor boon as niggard skies will grant
(Dribbling, as misers might, faint, straggling beams,
Bronze rays of light, for Summer's golden streams).
Yet in old days this beggar was a Chief,
Regal with flowery crown and emerald leaf;
To beast and bird his bounteous house was free,
A haunt of building wren and singing bee,
Each scented bough of shining pensioners
More full than is the fire-bright, gracious furze—
Scale-burnished beetles, chafers, hoverer-flies,
And moths with powdered plumes and soft, deep eyes.
Here, where his subjects made their choice resort,
The Elvish Monarch held his jolly court,
Under a canopy rich-garlanded,
Where warm night-winds a fragrant incense shed.
Yet still one branch survives; and still, with Spring,
Life will flood back to this dead, dreaming thing,
The swelling sap will rise, the old delight
Wrap up one wrinkled arm with blossomed white.

Wild Broom

O PERISHING, wasteful Broom,
Each spur and spire
A splendour outleaping, a flickering fire,
Thou wilt burn thyself out!
Why lavish thy gold
On this bleak hillside where no eyes behold,
Save the flitting birds, that pass unaware,
And the scuttering bunnies who never care?
Be thrifty, and keep for the bare, dark days
Some wisp of bright raiment, some spark of thy blaze!
Be wiser, O Broom!
Be wastrel no longer, but mindful of doom!

But the Broom —
I flame, I expire;
I am Beauty's plumage, my wings are a fire;
For a boon, neither buying nor sold,
I scatter my gold.
I have made this hillside one far-trumpeted shout.
Sky and field may behold,
And the wind-ragged rout
Of tumultous clouds,
The passionate dawn, and the hurrying crowds
Of fear-stricken lives, they may pause, they may listen
To my pealing thanksgiving,
My clamouring glory, my fierce boughs that glisten

And blaze to dry scrub, as I perish by living.
Your chaffer I flout,
Your marts and your pricings, your wisdom I scout.
But oh, the mad joy as I burn myself out!

Barren Sloe

O BLACKTHORN myriad-budded,
Lifting your tiny fists of clenchèd white!
Be braver, Bush, for Winter is vanished quite!
Your fears forget, and open your hands shut tight!
Now for eyes' delight
Your treasures unlock, that our ways be flooded
With beauty! With snowy blossom thick
Each naked bough, each bare, sharp stick
Cover, that hither whoever strays
May shout unawares, as he stands at gaze!
Ah, Bush, there is wrath through the copse!
The blackbird chides, as he calls to his mate;
The rook, as he tugs in the elm-tree tops,
For his nest the branches tearing, drops
The twig from his beak, and guffaws in amaze;
Scream-voiced jay is harshly scolding;
Robin and wren hold gossip, beholding;
You make them feel cold, shrill squirrels chatter;
Bunny sits up and ponders the matter;
Chaffinch and thrush, in a tumult of scorn,
Cry 'Fie on the Bush of the bare, black thorn!'
O Bush, you are laggard, are late!
Why, elm has flowered, the raspberry brakes
Are dreaming of buds! Even bramble knows,
The forest slut, with her drab, slack ways,
That her autumn finery tawdry shows!

She is getting new leaves. Bold furze is ablaze!
See, pussy-willows their halls have decked
For a marriage-feast, where in silk attire
And robes gold-powdered the lovers have come;
And a jubilant quire
Rushes in, till the chambers rock with hum
Of the minstrel-bees, till the whole house sings.
Clumsy and joyous, big bumble shakes
The catkined stems; peacock butterfly flits
From his winter niche, to the golden-flecked,
Mad, blossoming trees, and in sunlight sits,
Forgetting how storms his glory have specked,
Fanning and shutting his faded wings.

Starlight

OCEAN, that eating Pride,
Seizes the sullen lands;
Wave after wave, with rushing tide
He ploughs the frightened sands.

Through crowded years of wrong
Filching our fruitful miles,
He has decked out his bosom strong
With flashing, emerald isles.

A bitter thief! but yet
His swelling wraths assuage.
For a new play the sands are set;
New lights attend the stage.

He is but a drowsy roar,
Far from these glistening shelves;
With link and lamp the dancing shore
'S a festival of elves.

The Pillars of Hercules

TUSCAN or Tyrian, Athenian bold,
Arab or Spaniard, ghosts of voyageurs old,
Thrice-valiant hearts who sailed these middle seas,
Seeking the pillared gates of Hercules,
A westward-beating scud, a flying drift
Thrusting to sunset and the land's steep rift!
Great, vanished friends, the self-same sights ye had
And with the self-same glories were made glad,
Who saw the white sierras shoulder aloft
Their snowfields tall, whence airs blow cool and soft,
Who watched the puffins from the tranquil wave
Spring, and the circling gulls! But ye were brave!
Knowing no earth beyond, but waters waste!
While I float on, nor fear lest currents haste,
Nor think, beyond these cliffs, of finis-terre,
Sure of new capes where'er my bark can fare,
Scorning all rumoured tale of God-cursed straits
Or let of wildered waves and storm-clashed gates.

Shadows

YE clouds and trees that cast
Your shadows on the lake,
Upon my mind you shall
No shadows make.

For like a loving face
From heaven you bend,
Saying, how great the peace
That would befriend.

Going my joyous way,
I hate the day's hot shine,
And drink your calm, sweet rest
Like cool, rich wine.

Fall closer, closer yet!
And thrust fierce light afar!
Keep back the climbing moon
And eve's proud star.

Freedom

WHY should I shrink from life,
Who have seen death's face?
How should I, if I would,
For fear find place?

Anger and scorn of men
He leaves aside,
Who has trampled into shards
His brittle pride.

Strange words are cast about,
And shouts arise,
That these are foiled, and that . . . . .
Has won the prize!

But from my cherished hopes
This boast remains:
No crown I seek, whose limbs
Will brook no chains!

The Cloud-Messenger

THESE clouds that all my heavens overcast
  Keep some their place awhile, then die in rain;
Others, before the scurrying winds amain,
Flee to where, hill on giant hill amassed,
Sown with white brooks, darkened with forests vast,
The towering homes of cold and moist disdain
The rank, wet flats, lush fields, hot, winking plain.
Cloud, wind, may flee; but me here toil holds fast.

So, like the exiled servant of the God,
I watch the changing skies. If wind and cloud
My thought might bear, then paths by me untrod
Should speak my message; peaks which mists enshroud
Would clang it; rains would write it on the sod:
Dark trees would whisper; cataracts cry aloud.

The Victor

DEAREST, if God should take
This life of mine, so fraught
With valour for your sake,
Though once a thing of naught
(When Death so poor a prey
Passed by and scorned to slay),

The Angels, far-renowned
And tired of earthly feats,
Seeing a man so crowned
And singing in their streets,
And seeking whence he had
A right so brave and glad,

Would say: 'His days were well;
Failure he knew; and pain;
Living, he walked in Hell;
Saw hopes and comrades slain;
Yea, joys were, leaf by leaf,
Shattered by winds of grief.

'Yet even this Tree, so bare,
Blossomed, and filled with song.
A Lady wise and fair,
Doing her brightness wrong,
This man from all the crowd,
Made with her beauty proud.'

Mid-August

ALL in a golden gown
Now *dal* upstands:
The rains no longer drown
The patient lands.

In the mango-boughs all day
The squirrel shrills;
The mynas' angry play
The sunlight fills.

From joy the butterflies
Have ceased to flit,
Nor at your coming rise,
But bask and sit;

And, while the whole world sings,
In the path arow,
Fanning their gaudy wings,
They burn and glow.

Banian Verses

i.

NOW for their winter feast
In the banian boughs joy-tremulous guests are shrilling;
The tree is a laurelled priest,
His old palms spreading, the air with blessing filling.
The winds fly forth from his hands,
And wide through the ways his benedictions scatter—
'Lo', they cry, 'where he stands,
Offering fruits, four on each four-leaved platter!
Priest and host, he calls,
He beckons you in to the feast he has consecrated!'

Wings to his windy halls
Rush in, till a hungry horde is gorged and sated.

ii.

AS a swarm of bees in a flowery bush aswing,
That sways to their weight, so now to the banian seeding
The birds fly up, and flutter, three parts awing.
Ah, Banian, see at your breast your children feeding!
They cry, they clutch, for the red berries thrust and wrestle;
Your fruit is their life, they cling in your breast and nestle.

iii.

LORD, when I hear Thy feasting birds in Thy banian,
Greatly do I rejoice;
For I have buoyant moods which lack a voice;
But these are fluttering pleasures, a jubilant throng,
Discordant gratitudes, far too happy for song.
See how they tug and rend the ripe, red berries!
This is their orchard, these their harvest of cherries!
Lord, let my praise go up with them from Thy banian!

Egrets in Rain

CATTLE-egrets amid the cows
Strutting and stalking,
Swaying and rocking, solemnly, stiltedly walking,
Why, when it rains, do you squat on the fence,
Huddled and fuddled and muddled,
With heads all sunken, with rough, ruffled, dense
White feathers touzled, as if you could thus
Ward off the cold storm, the heavens' damp fuss?
You are welted and belted and pelted,
You are wretched and wet,
But, for all your martyrlike airs, no pity you get!
You have banians, bamboos,
Or pipals, or mangoes, whichever you choose—
Why, any tree could give you a house—
Yet you sit in the rain,
With bodies that scold, and drowned looks that complain!

Green Pigeon

GREEN pigeon came to our pipal,
The giant who year by year for a festival-tide
His chambers that rock with kindly mirth flings wide
(He is regal in bounty, our pipal).
He was crammed with excited mynas and saw-voiced crows,
At his base each night the jackals gorged in rows
(He has pensioners many, the pipal);
Kingcrows fluttered, and tiny wings were flitting,
Aloft an indifferent, bald-browed kite was sitting
(He too had a use for our pipal);
When, slipping in like tremulous, timid flame,
To the vulgar, screaming mob our shy guests came
(Green pigeon came to the pipal);
Softer their plumes than the clouds' swan-down, and the sheen
Of rainbows burnished their forest gold and green
(They had robbed the woods for our pipal);
And the screeching parrots were shamed, and the kokils' clamour
Died on the wind, and the coppersmith stilled his hammer
(There was peace in the swaying pipal);
The roller hushed, as he rocketed out to the light—
His robes were gaudy, glaring, garishly bright
(Green pigeon had come to the pipal);

The kingcrow ceased to bully, the myna to scold;
A gentler green was glowing, a glimmering gold
(Green pigeon had come to our pipal).

Evening Voluntary

NOW is the time of the great evening peace,
When light and shadow lie side by side,
Chequering the fields; day's oppression and pride
Are ending, the long misery and heat.
The coppersmith* flags at his forge; his hammer's beat,
Tonk, tonk, tonk, sounds but at intervals.
A cool breath stirs; voices of birds awaken;
A kingcrow chases a kite; pert, golden-eyed,
A myna struts; on a sudden the air is shaken
With yelling laughter of kokils; an oriole calls;
These in their fashion all witness their joy of release.
Their fierce, proud Lord forgoes his power to oppress.

I will seek the woods, the shining quietness
Of *sal* and flowering laurel—there wait till falls
The drift of darkening shadows, and memory throws
Over loved trees and spirit her cloak of repose.

* The blue barbet.

Encouragement to Pipals

DANCING pipal leaves!
Net of the glowing silver that follows dawn!
In endless revel you spend the hours.
At noon, if some chance wind come straying,
Instantly all your hosts are playing!
Rufflers, your points are flashing! You are swaying
A thousand ways at once, a twinkling sea!
You have no flowers,
Nor at your feet a sunlit, emerald lawn,
But, O you rogues who intern the wandering light
And make your captive scatter his gold,
Who dance, dance, dance,
As reapers dance round their tied-up sheaves,
Dance, dance, dance,
As the waves dance, you who are waves of a tree!
Joy have you brought to me,
Joy your joyous steps to behold,
Joy as deep as has come from sight
Of many a flower's fair countenance!

Rebuke to Banians

RED-BERRIED banian, still unsatisfied,
For all your swelling bulk and verdurous pride
Of sweeping branches, throwing out new sprays
And fibres ever, seeking still to raise
Fresh pillars and augment your kingdom vast,
Fenced from the sun and the destructive blast
Of the wild month of rains, that strips and tears
Tough pipals and to earth the *siris* bears,
Uproots the sturdy jack, and maims the teak!
Somewhat in envy, banian, do I speak;
Yet not unjustly. If my tree could show
One-tenth so rich a pomp, such scarlet glow
Of green-set fruit that feeds the scuffling bats
And eager birds, and even for sordid rats
Scatters a largesse. . .such a shining roof
Of glossy leaves, Night's Temple huge, sun-proof,
With cool, deep glooms where gods and flies awhile
Shelter from noon. . .with many a dappled aisle,
Where rays of light in harmless arrows fall,
And tired winds sleep, and birds forget to call. . .
If this were mine, I should not grab more land
Or seek proportions vaster, lot more grand;
I would not still of waxing empire dream,
Chamber to chamber add, and giant beam
With beam inlay, an endless swink and toil;
With nervous, itching fingers still more soil
Grasp and for yet more swollen kingdom strive!
No, I should rest, and save my soul alive.

Spectators

COMES a wind, which drives like a hooded snake
The dust before it, crying: 'Get out of the way,
You little fellows! The Champions are coming to play,
So clear this world, our pitch! Run away, and hide!'
And the black-cloaked, dignified myna steps aside;
And that pert cockney, the chattering squirrel,
Runs for his life; the roller, impudent swank,
Who sits on the goalpost, sunning his gaudy wings,
Drawing all eyes in the shimmer, says 'I'm off!';
The coppersmith closes his forge, and even the crow
Sidles to shelter.
Gray clouds veil the sky,
Armies gathered in silence; then a swaying,
Wavering wall of rain sweeps over the field;
The round-headed, glossy-leaved jacks are all acurtsy,
Bobbing and bending—this way and that they yield.
The great game, rain and wind at football together,
Holds a million eyes, of a host that take secret station
And watch with swelling, speechless indignation.

Himalayan Bulbul

FIRE-CAPPED bulbul, flame-mantilla'd friend,
How will this mask of joy and fear have end?
Thou in the branches swaying, hurling about
Thy body, so that all thy actions shout,
Thou hast no care except to indulge the thrill
Of winds that roam the pine-sharp-scented hill,
Which bear thy reckless body as a boat,
That now shoots rapids, now aloft will float.
Yet, in the night, of hawk and knife-beaked owl
And sinuous snake and cruel claws that prowl
Thy dreams are rife, and agonisèd cries
Through the still darkness I have heard arise.
Then airs which sport with thee by day can make
Each huddled bough with drowsy terror shake.

Life and Death

AT the Bengali service, which was long,
With endless droning hymns, with droned-out prayer
Which seemed to make the universe its care,
Working the springing spirit of man deep wrong,
A drowsy, fumbling rumble of parrot-phrase,
Dull, dull! My hat, but it was dull!
So dull, it seemed to daze,
Sandbagging thought, vaguely vexing the ear
And brain, which were too wise to admit and hear...
Suddenly at the preacher's back there shone,
Framed in an open window, a glorious sight,
A mighty bánian; and my heart was gone
To service there, with squirrel and pagan bird,
With butterflies, and leaves, by sharp gusts stirred.
Do you not see? The whole thing was living!
There was worship, there was prayer, there thanksgiving!
The tree was glad; its spreading boughs were resting;
A million happy lives, wild with elation,
Scampered and flew, or in its depths were nesting;
Shadow and light, in magical alternation,
Chequered the clear, brown earth; with flooded light
Its towering body was bathed, its leaves were bright.
Here were dead books, drugged souls, here apathy,
Murmuring chant, and aimless, nerveless word,

Wandering in endless track, about and about —
But ah, how bright the Tree!
How good the Life without!

Church Reform

EVERY church should have behind the pulpit
A window taking up the whole of the wall;
Behind the window there should be a tree,
Banian, or oak, or beech, or ash, or elm,
Magnolia, wattle, chestnut, baobab,
Mangrove, sandal, cedar of Lebanon,
(Anyway, something huge, with roomy arms).
Squirrels and every sort of bird should here
Be cherished — I would have it felony
To bring a gun within a thousand yards,
Unless to shoot a preacher once a year;
And even he, I think, might be let off,
If the church stewards kept the tree well stocked.

A Yellow Moon

A yellow moon, and lilies white —
Against a mango screen,
A pleasaunce set for Love's delight,
With lawns of sloping green.

White *bela, champa's* pungent whorls,
Nagkeshar, — wiser far,
If here he brought the Rose of Girls,
To win his timid war!

His bee-strung bow, his arrows five,
The silly Thief might burn!
My heart, through every vein alive,
To one dear face would turn!

An Old Woman

BENEATH this pipal, on a verminous mat,
With skin-clad ribs and withered shank she lies,
Dying by inches, after her fierce day
Of labour — carrying water, bearing babes,
And nameless menial tasks — the anguished toil
For the scant meal which came with so much fear.

Though we escape the rending hands of pain,
And shaking fevers, famine's choking grip,
When we have slaved, and striven, and brought
forth life,
Have sheltered youth to power, for our reward
Await us age, and agues, twitching limbs,
And brain too worn to care save for release.

The Banian's Guests

THESE sojourners of a day and night pause here,
One with the friendly life of tree and road.

Against the many-twisted serpent-trunk
They prop a sheet of corrugated iron,
Filched from some railway-shed, and hang with pots
The bumps and cracks provided for their use;
A lean, appalling 'pie' keeps guard on goods
That kites and lepers would be loath to pinch;
Their stolen kerosene tins crows inspect
And pass them, certified as empty found.

Beneath a better bivouac by far
Than those I had in Mesopotamian sands,
Black, matted heads peep out and watch the world.

Through the Rain

I SAW a jungle-dweller, dark, unclad
Except for waist-rag—in his ears he had
Rosettes of oleander, glimmering red
Stars on the close-webbed blackness of his head.
Stark in the drizzling eve he stood, and made
Tough *sal*-roots leap beneath his mattock's blade.
His smoky hut, and hungry, squalid brood,
Waiting these sticks to cook their scanty food,
Sufficed, and at his toil he smote amain,
Flaunting his gladness through the cheerless rain.

Ekteswar Mela.

AGES since, in a blinding flash,
He came to earth, with shattering crash,
(Siva the Sage, Ekteswar's Lord)

Cleaving the quaking skies asunder,
With lightning chisel and mallet of thunder,
(Siva the Sage, Ekteswar's Lord)

The tallest *simul*, from crown to root,
He smote, and an old man slew at its foot,
(Siva the Sage, Ekteswar's Lord)

And, after the storm, the people found
A jagged rock on the blackened ground
(Siva the Sage, Ekteswar's Lord).

So amid the trees they built a dome,
Shrining the stone, the Great God's home;
(Siva the Sage, Ekteswar's Lord)

And, year by year, as the tired year ends,
When the God through heaven his war-clouds sends,
(Siva the Sage, Ekteswar's Lord)

When his white plumes flash on the dark expanse,
And his thunders rattle, his lightnings dance,
(Siva the Sage, Ekteswar's Lord)

Women of barren, aching breast,
Women by grievous Fate distressed
(By Siva the Sage, Ekteswar's Lord),

With frightened faces and eyes that stare
Bright as the pots of fire they bear
(For Siva the Sage, Ekteswar's Lord),

In procession move to the shrine, and throw
Their burdens down, till the ground's aglow
(For Siva the Sage, Ekteswar's Lord);

Aglow with the tongues that flicker and shoot
Like a thousand snakes that sway to a flute
(To Siva the Sage, Ekteswar's Lord),

Then home, through the folk and the clamours loud,
On the dust-choked roads which the ox-carts crowd
(From Siva the Sage, Ekteswar's Lord),

With hearts where Hope's red flames upthrust,
Lit at those flames which danced in the dust
(To Siva the Sage, Ekteswar's Lord),

They fare, through the eve that's athrob with drum
And cymbal's clash, and with shouted hum
'Siva the Sage, Ekteswar's Lord'.

THESE tigerlilies' petals curve
Back like oryx-horns; their arrogant grace
Makes my brain an Arabian Nights; they dance,
Sultans in the Damascus of my soul.
O sinister, ebony-dotted, beautiful flowers!
Mind of the world, that Thou shouldst think of these!

Fire is a thought of Thine; this pine-fed flame;
And smoke which grows from fire: these warm, dark firs;
Flower-downy moths which flit from fir to flame;
This wall of mist, which shuts, heaven-high, vale-deep.
A thousand things there are whose beauty pains,
Tearing the exquisite sense with sharp delight:
The broad, gold smile of sunflower; prim device:
Of snapdragon, dainty in such different hues;
Begonia on these climbing, cloud-wrapt ways;
Demure, red-tongue-outthrusting fuchsia; dense
Fragrance of heliotrope; the crinkled floss
Of evening primrose, pollened thick, so soft
The fingers feel it like a fairy's plumes;
Pink sea-thrift carpeting a crumbled cliff;
A Cornish moor, bee-murmurous, heather-scented,
Sun-drowsy, lulled with chime of double seas;
A Cotswold hazel-coppice, primrose-starred;
Moonlight on Indian waters; frosty skies

Of cold, bright stars.
Mind whence my mind was made,
Thìnker, Drèamer, Pàinter, Architect!
Why hast Thou so with beauty crammed this world,
Which we have crowded close with graves of war,
With factories, palaces, and works of art?

Retrospect

AH, I muse, by any other channel
Smoothly had this river reached the sea!
But this has thwarting sands and black, strait chasms,
Roaring gulfs, one eddying jeopardy!
Spate of melting Alp and Andes fills,
Sudden torrents rushing from the hills;
Racing Rhone, and Jumna's turbid waves;
Rain-augmented Meghna fiercely raves.

Falls on my ear at last that deeper sound,
From vaster swell and waters more profound?
Sweep up, O Sea! and lay these tides to rest
And guide the fretted stream to thy strong breast!

Recollection

COMRADE — or comrades shall I say?
For Thou wast with a band!
Brave hearts, braver than any here,
Dear, beyond praising dear,
Lovers of me, beloved friends who perished,
Protesilaus-like, 'mid scattering spray
Of those adventurous seas you cast behind,
Tingeing with blood the new life's hard-bought strand!
You from the thunder of the conquered surf,
Through a screaming air and past the death-swept sand,
In a morning deaf with hate, with battle blind,
Climbed to the sacred turf.
Ah, loved with tears, with dry-eyed grief, with heart
Aching and shrinking! Who, if I could tell
Of the deep pangs the mind bears graven well,
Would yield belief, when to the day's demand
Needs must I take a cloudless face and hand
Not faltering, neither tired nor flagging aught,
Urged to their task by hid, imperious thought?
Gone are the days, the pleasant sights we cherished...
Spring, and the cowslipped green, the cricket sward,
Autumn with health and game, and winter's smart
Tingling each limb. Now shine no more for me
Your glorious eyes, dim in that Devil's Grave,
Nor comes your King. But I through toil-filled years

Have kept the faith, through weariness and fears
Longing for breaking dawn. Though rains should lack,
Though harvests fail, though friends no more come
back,
I shall not fail, who had so dear a Lord,
And own such graves hallowing a hostile sea
And hard-won cliffs of Life's Gallipoli.

Invocation

COME to the smouldering fire of my heart,
Spirit of Inspiration!
Scattering sparks, beating the embers, awaking
Tongues of flame that dance and shout in elation!
Cleaving, piercing, dividing apart
Night, which hangs like a huge bat, drowsy and blind!
So travellers, thridding their ways
On the dull road, shall for a moment pause,
And stand in the splendour, clapping their hands for
delight,
Or, silent in wondering happiness, stare at the sight,
At the swaying shadows, the leaping god who awes
Whirling amid the flames' intoxication;
With burning eyes shall gaze,
Lifting glad brows whence the glow shall fade to find
In memory's wells its deep, securer station.
Spirit of Inspiration!
These shall in my bright moment tower, then wend
Onward with praise to their dark journey's end.

Epilogue

WITH words as counters, talk of day and night,
Sun, moon and stars, using such toys as these,
I play, who towards the timeless shape my flight,
Seeking a home that knows nor lands nor seas.
Hereafter, on the mirror of that mind
If any shadow of these times should fall,
Amid that brighter world how shall I find
Utterance that can my vanished dreams recall,—
How magical the orange moon arose
Over my palms or on stark Moab hills;
How musical the brook of Weston flows
Through hazel shade which March with windflowers fills?
So, after sleep, its mists of fleeing thought
Vainly upon the mind's clear sky are sought.

John in Prison.

'This volume proclaims Mr. Thompson a poet of high gifts; he has inspiration, he has sincerity, he has elevated expression, he has a technique that is rarely at fault. Much may be forgiven to one who has "made" half a dozen things that are moving and memorable.' *Daily Chronicle.*

Ennerdale Bridge.

'There are many individual, beautiful things in this volume, but, above all, it is the fabric on which this poetry is woven that gives it its rarest quality. Poetry may sometimes seem a thing as distinct from the life and being of its maker as a flower in a dull and heedless room. Here, one might say, it is the room itself that at the same time graces and is concentrated in the flower.' *Westminster Gazette.*

'This sincerely, gravely English thought lodged securely in the strange imagery of India is something novel for poetry . . . The interesting thing, the suggestive thing, about his Indian poems is that they contain the same finely traditional style of thought and outlook and imaginative language—the best part of an essential English nationalism—but embodied in colouring and circumstance which are profoundly Indian.' *Times Lit. Suppt.*

Væ Victis.

'He writes of Syria and of Lebanon in a way that no one but Flecker has surpassed. The book has an importance out of all proportion to its size, and reveals a poet who will go very far. It is our misfortune not to have read any other works of Mr. Thompson; it will, however, be a pleasant task to watch his certain progress to fame.' *The Near East.*

'Pictures bitten in with a strong, relentless hand' *Times Lit. Suppt.*

'Almost intolerable in its gaunt pathos'. *Aberdeen Daily Journal.*